United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends mandate of UNPROFOR for additional three-months interim period until 30 June; decides to reconsider in one month, and at any time Secretary-General so requests, UNPROFOR's future mandate in light of negotiations and situation on ground.

+ Leaders of two communities in Cyprus agree to resume joint negotiations on 24 May at United Nations Headquarters.

+ Investigation into reported mistreatment of United Nations relief worker in southern Sudan ordered by Secretary-General.

+ Secretary-General concerned over killing of Bangladesh staff member serving with UNTAC; two ethnic Vietnamese killed and 14 injured in grenade attack in Phnom Penh.

+ UNHCR closes last of seven Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand.

+ World Court in Hague to hold hearings on 1 April on Bosnian request for provisional measures in case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) concerning war crimes.

+ Radio operator serving with United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission dies in car accident in Kuwait.

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The Security Council today voted unanimously to extend the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) for a further interim period of three months until 30 June.

The Council, by adopting resolution 815 (1993), decided to reconsider UNPROFOR's mandate within one month, or at any time at the request of the Secretary-General, in the light of developments in the Yugoslav talks and the situation on the ground. The Council acted under the enforcement provisions of the the United Nations Charter determined to ensure the security of UNPROFOR and its freedom of movement.

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Expressing deep concern by the continuing cease-fire violations by the Yugoslav parties and others concerned, the Council determined that the situation continued to constitute a threat to peace and security in the region. The Council also expressed support for the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on Yugoslavia in their efforts to help to determine the future status of the Yugoslav territories. It demanded full respect for international humanitarian law, and in particular the Geneva Conventions, in the United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to report urgently to it on how the United Nations Peace Plan for Croatia could be effectively put into effect.

The Secretary-General has stated that the total costs of maintaining UNPROFOR for the three-months period would be $336 million. The General Assembly will take action on the proposed budget for UNPROFOR at a later date.

In a separate development, Croatia has contended that Serbs in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be given more than one additional month to comply with the United Nations peace plan and the Security Council resolutions. Croatian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mario Nobilo, told correspondents today that if the Serbian side refuses to accept the United Nations peace plan, the Security Council should "consider more serious action to stop and erode the aggression". That could be done by lifting the arms embargo and endorsing other forceful measures to protect the territorial integrity of its Member States, he said.

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The leaders of the two communities in Cyprus have agreed to resume the joint negotiations on 24 May at United Nations Headquarters. The announcement was made following joint meetings today at Headquarters with Secretary-General Boutro Boutros-Ghali, at which the timing, modalities and preparations for the resumption of substantive direct talks was discussed.

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General said the talks in New York would be preceded by preparatory meetings in Nicosia with the leaders of the two communities in order to clarify their concerns relating to the draft overall framework agreement contained in the Set of Ideas with a view to creating a new climate of confidence before May.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali welcomed the declared intentions of the two leaders to meet privately from time to time and to hold meetings with the heads of the political parties from both sides. He said he believed that such encounters could overcome long standing mutual distrust and could contribute to the success of both the preparatory process and the joint negotiations.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed concern over the killing last night of a UNTAC civilian staff member serving with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), according to a United

Nations spokesman today. The staff member, who was a national of Bangladesh, was killed "under circumstances that are still being investigated", probably by members of the Cambodian People's Armed Forces.

The spokesman said the Secretary-General was extremely concerned about the incident and was "anxious that the parties responsible for it stop this immediately". He also reported that there had been four grenade attacks in Phnom Penh resulting in two deaths and 14 injured, mostly of ethnic Vietnamese.

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A United Nations relief worker of the World Food Programme (WFP) has been taken prisoner and subjected to severely harsh treatment by forces of Colonel John Garang in Kongor, southern Sudan, according to reports received by the United Nations today. The staff member, Jean-François Darq, who was taken prisoner during a fight between SPLA factions on Saturday, 27 March, has been evacuated from Kongor to Nairobi.

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General said he was concerned by the report and had ordered the responsible United Nations offices to investigate the incident and report to him in full. He reaffirmed his commitment to the security of field staff and said he was prepared to take appropriate action once the facts were known.

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Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), today officially closed the last of seven camps for Cambodian refugees in Thailand, according to a press release issued by the agency. The camp once held more than 200,000 refugees and was considered to be the largest Cambodian community outside the capital Phnom Penh. It has now been one year since the UNHCR began a voluntary repatriation programme for some 375,000 Cambodians.

At ceremonies at the Thai border, Mrs. Ogata thanked the Thai Government for having provided sanctuary to more than 700,000 Cambodians over the past 18 years of war and exile and said that UNHCR would accompany the returnees on their way home. "We will be there to help you in the first steps of your new life in Cambodia", she said, referring to quick impact projects designed to ease the return of the refugees to their villages.

The projects are being carried out in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other non-governmental agencies in order to support the resettlement of the Cambodians, 339,000 of whom have already returned to their country.

The repatriation operation is expected to be completed by mid-April. It is, along with the registration of 4.6 million voters for the elections on 23 May, regarded as a main success in the fulfilment of the 1991 Paris peace agreements that ended 12 years of war in Cambodia.

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The International Court of Justice in The Hague will begin hearings on 1 April on a request by Bosnia and Herzegovina for provisional measures in the case of Bosnia versus Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) concerning the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

According to a communiqué issued in The Hague today, Bosnia had asked the Court to communicate that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), together with its agents and surrogates in Bosnia and elsewhere, "must immediately cease and desist from all acts of genocide and genocidal acts against the people of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina". Bosnia has also asked that under the current circumstances, any State "has the right to come to the immediate defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina" by providing weapons, military equipment and supplies, and armed forces.

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A radio operator serving with the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Mission (UNIKOM) in Kuwait has been killed in a tragic car accident in Kuwait. Fso Kebede of Ethiopia was travelling from Kuwait City to UNIKOM Headquarters in Umm Qasr on 15 March when he had the accident, which was the first since the Mission began in May 1991.

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